



Summary: Appendix L: Guidance for Preparing Digital Data and FIRM Databases

Audience

The primary intended audience for this guidance is FEMA Regions and mapping partners, including Production and Technical Services Contractors (PTS), Cooperating Technical Partners (CTPs), and Other Federal Agencies (OFAs) contracted to produce FIRM maps and databases and FIS Reports.

Purpose

Appendix L ties the engineering data standards defined in Appendix M to the regulatory FIRM and FIS products. This appendix sets forth standards for the FIRM database, including data sources, datum control, data structure, data types and all attribution specifications for spatial and non-spatial tables required to produce a compliant database.

Appendix L has been revised to align regulatory product guidance with FEMA's digital vision and to allow for clearer color maps focused on floodplains produced at a lower cost and level of effort. This Appendix in conjunction with *Appendix K: Format and Standards for Flood Insurance Rate Maps* provides standards to mapping partners that enable map creation with little or no manual cartographic finishing. This appendix in conjunction with *Procedure Memorandum 66: Flood Insurance Study Report Alignment to Digital Vision* will guide mapping partners to create a Flood Insurance Study report directly from tables within the FIRM Database.

The updated Appendix L strengthens the link between the FIRM Database and FIRM panels that will allow for a more automated and streamlined map production process to be implemented in the future. The Appendix also outlines the link between the tables within the FIRM Database and tables in the FIS Report that will allow for a more automated and streamlined production process to be implemented in the future.

FEMA Regions must implement Appendix L for all newly contracted studies beginning in FY2012. It is also highly recommended that the new FIRM Database template be used for studies contracted in FY2011 that are not yet Preliminary and the mapping partner has not begun production of the FIRM Database. The decision to apply this Appendix to studies contracted in FY2011 is up to Regional discretion.

Through implementation of this Appendix, it is expected that costs associated with the production of FIRM panels will be reduced. This is due to simplified mapping standards and the associated simplified tables in the FIRM Database. In addition most, if not all, of the FIS Report in the future will be produced from automated tools that pull information directly from project databases.

Risk MAP Guidance

This document is a component of Risk MAP Guidance. The Risk MAP program is managed by FEMA to develop flood risk information and work with communities to help them understand and act on the data to manage the risks. Risk MAP Guidance defines the product and process standards and best practices for the program:

- Standards are contained in the document "Guidelines and Standards for Flood Risk Analysis and Mapping" (G&S document) which primarily contain standards, but currently substantial best practice information are also included.
- Procedure Memos supersede portions of the G&S document or address new issues not currently covered. In most cases they will be integrated into the G&S document over time.
- Operating Guidance describes best practices that support the Risk MAP standards.

